

CYTOGENETICS AND HAEMATOLOGY. Clinics in Haematology, Vol. 9, No. 2, February 1980. Edited by D. G. Penington. (Pp viii + 224. Illustrated. £9.00). London, Philadelphia, Toronto: W. B. Saunders Company Ltd., 1980.

THE red kidney bean holds a special place in the reviewer's esteem, as once it was of assistance in his struggle to obtain a post-graduate diploma. At that time it had just been discovered that an extract of this bean induced peripheral blood lymphocytes to divide. This resulted in a great advance in cytogenetics and began its major impact on medicine. A question in this new field was, of course, widely anticipated by examinees and an added attraction was that in those days the subject could be completely mastered in 15 minutes reading. It was, therefore, to the great joy of many that the kidney bean and the advances stemming from it duly made its debut on the examination paper.

Today's student faces a sterner task. It now requires an issue of the Clinics in Haematology series to review the cytogenetics of just the haematological disorders. To some this might make the book sound forbidding, conjuring an image of pages packed with mysterious karyotypic formulae and a subject grown hopelessly complex for the newcomer to grasp easily. This book is quite the reverse and far from being dull or incomprehensible, it is much more likely to prove to be a springboard directing the uninitiated towards a new interest. This is, in part, due to the first two chapters which clearly explain the nomenclature of cytogenetics, the laboratory methods used in chromosome analysis and the newer banding techniques. Other chapters by well-known contributors deal with the cytogenetic findings in acute and chronic leukaemias, other myeloproliferative disorders and lymphoma. The section on chronic myeloid leukaemia is especially interesting in view of the speculation aroused on stem cell relationships and leukaemogenesis by the recently recognised relationship between this disease and a form of acute lymphocytic leukaemia bearing the Philadelphia chromosome.

Chromosomal abnormality is a fundamental facet of oncology and this book is strongly recommended, not only to haematologists, but to anyone interested in tumours. It has the great advantage that it does not require the reader to have a prior expertise in cytogenetics. J.H.R.

DERMATOLOGY FOR THE PHYSICIAN. An Illustrated Guide. By E. L. Rhodes. (Pp 104, Illustrations colour 163. £8.50). London: Bailliere Tindall, 1979.

THIS book, as its subtitle 'An Illustrated Guide' indicates, is an excellent photographic manual of common skin conditions. The text is concise, the print clear and the eighteen chapters carefully selected. The combination of good colour photographs and crisp adjoining comments should be of value to medical students and general physicians.

A.M.T.K.

DERMATOLOGY. By J. S. Pegum and Harvey Baker. Third Edition. (Pp 278, Figs 106. £4.95). London: Bailliere Tindall, 1979.

THIS textbook complements Dermatology for the Physicians discussed above. The text is much fuller and more descriptive. The photographs are mainly in black and white and though they are good, it rather detracts from the presentation. This, however, is a good, sound, readable dermatology textbook for medical students and doctors.

A.M.T.K.

A SHORT TEXTBOOK OF MEDICINE. Sixth Edition. By J. C. Houston, C. L. Joiner and J. R. Trounce. (Pp 661. £5.45). London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979.

THIS text is intended for medical students during their clinical clerkship and apprenticeship. It is a concise account of the subject with plenty of material to satisfy examiners for the final medical degree.

Eighteen years have elapsed since the first edition and the sixth edition has been extensively revised to include the strides made in medicine over these years. However, skilful editing and pruning still justifies its title of a short text book. It is certainly very readable and can be thoroughly recommended.

J.V-O